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The Secret Art of Dying

Esoteric Deathbed Practices in Heian Japan

JACQUELINE I. STONE

DURING THE LATTER part of the Heian period (794–1185), death came to be conceived in Japan's Buddhist circles as a critical juncture when devout practitioners might escape *samsāra* altogether by achieving birth in the pure land (J. *ōjō*) of a buddha or bodhisattva. Once born in a pure land, one's own eventual attainment of buddhahood was said to be assured. "Pure Land" teachings did not yet have the exclusivistic connotations that they would later assume in the sectarian movements of Hōnen (1133–1212) and Shinran (1173–1262); aspirations for *ōjō* were embraced by Buddhists of all schools, and a range of practices was directed toward that end. Nor did all devotees seek the same pure land. Some aspired to birth in the Tosotsu (Skt. Tuṣita) Heaven, where the future Buddha Miroku (Maitreya) dwells; or the Fudaraku (Potalaka) paradise of the bodhisattva Kannon (Avalokiteśvara) discussed in D. Max Moerman's chapter in this volume; or other superior realms. But by far the most popular postmortem destination—and the one usually designated by the term "Pure Land"—was the Land of Utmost Bliss (Sukhāvātī, Gokuraku) presided over by the Buddha Amida (Skt. Amitābha, Amitāyus), said to lie in the western quarter of the cosmos. Popular songs, hymns, poetry, art, and liturgical performances, as well as doctrinal writings, celebrated Amida's "welcoming descent" (J. *raigō*), together with his holy retinue, to meet practitioners at the time of death and escort them to his realm. The first instructions for deathbed practice (*rinjū gyōgi*) ever compiled in Japan—which appear in the famous *Ōjō yōshū* (Essentials of birth in the Pure Land, 985), a manual of Pure Land practice by the Tendai scholar-monk Genshin (942–1017)—were framed in an Amidist mode. Genshin explained how dying monks should hold a five-colored cord fastened to a buddha image, visualize Amida's coming, and chant the *nenbutsu*, the invocation of Amida's name ("Namu Amida butsu"),

so as to generate the all-important "last thought" that would ensure birth in his Pure Land. Several Heian-period hagiographical collections called *ōjōden* (accounts of those born in the Pure Land) were compiled, recording the exemplary deaths of monks, nuns, and laypersons believed to have achieved this goal. It is no exaggeration to say that Pure Land imagery and rhetoric dominated the ways in which people thought about and prepared for dying.

And yet, other strands of Buddhism also played a role in preparations for the next life and in deathbed practice. Perhaps the most prominent of these was *mikkyō*, or esoteric Buddhism. This might at first seem surprising, in that *mikkyō*, in terms of its formal doctrine, has so often been represented as a teaching for this world. Kūkai (774–835), the founder of the esoteric Shingon school who played a key role in the formation of esoteric Buddhist discourse, had stressed that *mikkyō* is the "lightning-fast vehicle" (Skt. *vajrayāna*) of enlightenment, superior in this regard to the gradual path of the lesser, exoteric teachings (J. *kengyō*).¹ Through performance of the "three secrets" (*sanmitsu*)—the forming of mudrās or scripted ritual gestures (*in*), the chanting of mantras (*shingon*), and the contemplation of esoteric deities or their symbolic representations—the body, mouth, and mind of the practitioner were said to be identified with those of the cosmic Buddha Dainichi (Skt. Mahāvairocana), thus "realizing buddhahood with this very body" (J. *sokushin jōbutsu*).² Notions of birth after death in a pure land find only the briefest mention in Kūkai's works.³ A decidedly this-worldly character is also suggested by the various *mikkyō* rites (*shuhō*), sponsored by the court or privately by aristocrats, which were thought to influence the natural and political spheres. Both of the major streams of esoteric Buddhism that took shape during the Heian period—Tōmitsu, or Kūkai's esoteric Shingon school, and Taimitsu, the esoteric branch of the Tendai school—developed complex ritual techniques intended to alleviate drought, quell epidemics, cure illness, secure the birth of male heirs, subdue enemies, and achieve other pragmatic aims. Thus one might expect that esoteric Buddhism would play little or no role in the sort of deathbed practices that Genshin had introduced, since these were framed in terms of liberation after death in a separate buddha realm and an ethos of "loathing this defiled world and aspiring to the Pure Land" (*onri edo gongu jōdo*). On closer examination, however, the reification of esoteric and Pure Land teachings into the opposing polar-

ities of “world affirmation” and “world denial” proves to have been largely a product of modern Shingon sectarian scholarship.⁴ A number of esoteric sūtras, ritual manuals, and other works imported during the Nara (710–794) and Heian periods contain spells and rites said to bring about birth after death in Amida’s realm.⁵ For example, the *Rishushaku* (Ch. *Liqushi*), a commentary on the esoteric scripture *Rishukyō* (*Liqu jing*, Sūtra of the guiding principle), expounds on the seed syllable 𑖀𑖃𑖄 that represents Amida, also known as Muryōju Nyorai (Tathāgata of Immeasurable Life); by upholding this one-syllable mantra, it says, one can avoid illness and disaster in this life and, in the next, achieve the highest level of birth in that buddha’s land.⁶ The *Muryōju giki* (Ch. *Wuliangshou yigui*), an influential ritual text, sets forth a meditation ritual, along with accompanying mudrās and mantras, for achieving birth after death in the Land of Utmost Bliss, as well as for transforming one’s present reality into the Pure Land.⁷ Whether based upon texts such as these or through their own innovation, a significant number of practitioners drew on esoteric Buddhism in their preparations for the next life. *Mikkyō* influences on Heian-period deathbed ritual ranged from the simple incorporation, without explicit theoretizing, of esoteric incantations or other elements into end-of-life practices for achieving birth in the Pure Land, to very detailed reformulations in esoteric doctrinal terms of both the concept of *ōjō* and the deathbed practices for achieving it. This chapter will consider some of these esoteric forms of deathbed practice, with particular attention to the question of whether or not a tension or contradiction was perceived between the goals of birth in the Pure Land and the realization of buddhahood with this very body and, if so, how it was addressed.

Esoteric Practices and Pure Land Aspirations: Some Unproblematized Combinations

A number of Heian *mikkyō* adepts aspired to birth in the Pure Land, with no apparent sense of incompatibility between the goals of the two doctrinal systems. The very earliest *ōjōden* collection, Yoshi-shige no Yasutane’s *Nihon ōjō gokuraku ki* (Record of those in Japan born in [the Pure Land of] Utmost Bliss, ca. 985), contains several such instances. For example, Zōmyō (843–927), the chief abbot (*zasu*) of Enryakuji, the great Tendai monastery on Mt. Hiei, had

been initiated into the threefold rites of Taimitsu practice but also practiced contemplation of Amida; at the end, it is said, he had his disciples chant Amida’s name and died facing west.⁸ Myōshō, another Hiei monk, “was from the outset drawn to the esoteric teachings” but also died contemplating Amida and chanting the *nenbutsu*.⁹ Shinrai, an esoteric adept practicing at Ishiyamadera, had mastered the three secrets. On the day of his death, he initiated his leading disciple into the secret mudrās and mantras of the Diamond Realm (*vajradhātu*, *kongōkai*) that he had not yet transmitted to him. Then he faced west, contemplating Amida, and passed away.¹⁰ Such examples show that even adepts self-identified with the esoteric teachings sought the Pure Land of Amida as their post-mortem goal. While the polemical intentions of the compiler, Yasutane, in representing such eminent monks as Pure Land devotees cannot be ignored, we find similar references in other types of sources as well. For example, we have a notice of resignation from Jōshō (906–983), abbot of the Kongōbuji, the Shingon monastery on Mt. Kōya, and concurrently the chief administrator of Kōfukuji and the Shingon temple Tōji. Jōshō petitioned in 981 to be released from all administrative duties in order to devote his remaining years to practices for achieving birth in Amida’s Pure Land.¹¹ Monks such as Jōshō and those just mentioned from *Nihon ōjō gokuraku ki* were learned clerics and thus surely aware of the differences in orientation between esoteric and Pure Land doctrinal teachings, and yet they are said to have turned their religious aspirations toward Amida’s Pure Land as death approached.¹² Such examples suggest that an individual’s religious aims and practices were not expected to conform throughout to a single doctrinal system or, perhaps more precisely, that doctrinal systems were more porous and accommodating than contemporary orthodoxy would suggest. Regardless of one’s sectarian identity or doctrinal orientation, “aspiring to the Pure Land” was a common vocabulary in which preparation for death was understood.

We also find cases of individuals self-described as Pure Land devotees who incorporated esoteric elements into their customary practices and directed them toward the goal of birth in Amida’s realm. Several early instances occur in the short biographical notices contained in the death register (*kakochō*) of the Nijūgo Zanmai-e (Twenty-five Samādhi Society), a fellowship of monks influential in the spread of Pure Land devotion that formed in 986 at

the Yokawa precinct of Mt. Hiei for the express purpose of encouraging one another in practices for achieving birth in Amida's Pure Land.¹³ These notices show that the society's members freely incorporated a range of practices, including esoteric ones, into their regular disciplines aimed at achieving *ōjō*. For example, the monk Myōfu (d. 1006) practiced both *nenbutsu* and sūtra recitation and at one point conducted a *goma* rite—the offering of oblations in the esoteric ritual fire—for more than a thousand days in order to achieve birth in the Pure Land.¹⁴ Ryōun (d. 1011) regularly practiced an offering rite to the esoteric deity Fudō Myōō (Skt. Acalanātha).¹⁵ Shōnen (a.k.a. Shōkin, d. 1015) for fifteen years chanted the *nenbutsu* ten thousand times at each of the six times of the day (*J. rokuji*) but also twice daily performed the esoteric Amida offering rite (*Amida kuyō hō*); in addition, he recited the *Lotus Sūtra* 4,200 times.¹⁶ Kōshin (d. 1021) repeatedly recited the *Lotus* and *Amida* sūtras, as well as the ten vows of bodhisattva Fugen (Skt. Samantabhadra), Amida's forty-eight vows, and the ten bodhisattva precepts, and also performed the Lotus repentance ritual (*J. Hokke senbō*); in addition, among other practices, he recited numerous esoteric mantras and dhāraṇīs, including the longer and shorter Amida spells, the Wish According (*zuigu*) dhāraṇī, and the Mantra of Light (*kōmyō shingon*), the Superlative Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Crown (Sonshō Daibutchō; hereafter "Superlative Spell"), the Arorikika mantra, and the mantras of Fudō and Butsugen (Skt. Bud-dhalocanā).¹⁷

The *kakochō* entry for Genshin, who was himself active in the group, quotes him as saying with characteristic humility that he lacked the intelligence to study esoteric teachings (*J. shingon*) and preferred to concentrate on the *nenbutsu*, yet he adds that he had regularly recited the spell of the Thousand-Armed Kannon, a dhāraṇī said to confer protection against fifteen types of inauspicious death, and also the Superlative Spell; the biography elsewhere notes that in addition to these two dhāraṇīs, Genshin recited those of Amida, Fudō, and Butsugen, as well as the Mantra of Light.¹⁸ Genshin also refers in his *Ōjō yōshū* to recitation of the Mantra of Light and other dhāraṇīs and sūtras of both esoteric and exoteric teachings as supporting practices for achieving birth in Amida's Pure Land.¹⁹

Another case in point is Genshin's disciple Kakuchō (952/960–1034), also a member of the Nijūgo Zanmai-e, who was celebrated

for his esoteric knowledge. According to his *ōjōden* biography, Kakuchō continually practiced the moon-disk contemplation (*gachirinkan* or *gatsurinkan*), an esoteric technique in which one visualizes a Sanskrit syllable, representing the originally unborn, above a lotus blossom against the background of a white disk, as vehicle for realizing the identity of the practitioner and the cosmic buddha. This account says that Kakuchō died contemplating the Buddha and later appeared in a dream to one of his disciples, announcing that he had been born in the Pure Land.²⁰ Members of the Nijūgo zanmai-e incorporated esoteric elements not only in their individual practices preparatory for death but also in their funerary rites. The society's regulations specify that at the time of its monthly gathering, after practicing the *nenbutsu* samādhi, members should empower sand by chanting the Mantra of Light and performing the three secrets contemplation. This sand was to be sprinkled over the bodies of any members of the society who had died, to release them from suffering and enable them to be born in the Pure Land.²¹

Similar instances can be found in connection with other monastic settings. Some especially striking examples appear in the *Kōyasan ōjōden*, which contains accounts of the Pure Land aspirants of the Shingon monastery at Mt. Kōya, including both official monks serving in Mt. Kōya's halls and temples and those "*bessho hijiri*" or ascetic holy men practicing in small reclusive communities (*bessho*) that formed on the slopes and valleys of the mountain's sacred precincts.²² For example, Kyōkai (d. 1093; known also as the "*Odawara hijiri*"), who played an organizing role in the early Kōya *bessho*, is said, as his daily practice, to have cultivated the practices of the two esoteric maṇḍalas, performed the Amida offering rite, practiced the Daibutchō dhāraṇī, and recited the Amida mantra; just before his death, he also copied and consecrated several hundred drawings of Fudō. On his deathbed, he faced west and chanted the *nenbutsu* with his fellow practitioners. Afterward, the monks heard mysterious music receding toward the west, while one dreamt that Kyōkai was ascending on clouds to the Pure Land, escorted by Amida's holy retinue.²³ It will be noted that almost none of the above examples draws a distinction between "exoteric" and "esoteric" practices; all disciplines are equally directed toward birth in the Pure Land.

Hayami Tasuku has argued that whatever the distinctions between Pure Land and esoteric doctrinal teachings, in actual prac-

tice, the chanted *nenbutsu* and the mantras and spells of the esoteric repertoire were understood in the same way—as powerful invocations able to effect release from the sufferings of the six paths, to pacify the spirits of the dead, and to bring about birth in a pure land, whether for oneself or for others. That is why, as Hayami demonstrates, both the *nenbutsu* and esoteric mantras were frequently recited in death-related contexts, such as “preemptive funerals” (*gyakushu*)—services for postmortem welfare performed in advance of an individual’s death—as well as funerary and memorial rites.²⁴ It is therefore not surprising that esoteric incantations were also incorporated into practices for the time of death. Since these mantras and dhāraṇīs were considered efficacious in dispelling malign influences or karmic obstructions, one also finds considerable overlap, in the deathbed context, between their contemplative and thaumaturgical functions. To mention a few examples from *ōjōden*: the dowager empress Kanshi (d. 1102) summons monks three days before her death and asks them to recite the name of the bodhisattva Kokūzō (Skt. Ākāśagarbha) and perform the rite of Daiitoku Myōō, an esoteric manifestation of Amida or Monju (Mañjuśrī), to banish hindrances at the time of her death. She herself dies facing west, holding a cord attached to a buddha image.²⁵ The councilor Ōe no Otomuto (d. 1184) chants the Superlative Spell seven times before he dies.²⁶

Other esoteric rituals were also performed at the time of death; the *ajari* (*ācārya*) Yuihan (d. 1095), who at one time served as the chief administrator of Mt. Kōya, has a *goma* rite offering to the esoteric deity Sonshō Butchō performed just before his death to ensure his right mindfulness in his last moments.²⁷ The monk Shinnō (d. 1096), at the time of his death, has his fellow monks perform the esoteric *rishu zanmai* service, while he himself faces west and chants the *nenbutsu*.²⁸ *Ōjōden* also offer examples of individuals using esoteric icons as their deathbed *honzon*, or object of worship, in preference to an image of Amida. Enshō (d. 963), the chief abbot of Enryakuji, enshrines at his deathbed images of both Amida and Sonshō Butchō.²⁹ In the same collection, a woman of the Tomo family, a wife of the governor of Ōmi Province and a devout *nenbutsu* practitioner, has her seat moved on the day of her death before the Womb World (*garbhadhātu*, *taizōkai*) maṇḍala, which presumably served as her deathbed *honzon*.³⁰ The *ajari* Enkyō (fl. ca. 1076), a monk of Mt. Hiei, enshrines at his bedside a *gachirin*, or

“moon disk,” on which to focus his final contemplations; an unnamed nun (n.d.) uses a painting of the esoteric *nyoirin* Kannon as her deathbed icon; and the *nyūdō* (lay monk) Myōjaku (d. ca. 1124–1126), a devotee of the bodhisattva Kokūzō and an accomplished esoteric practitioner, hangs near himself at the time of death an inscription of the seed syllable *vam*, representing Dainichi’s wisdom.³¹ Other individuals die forming mudrās associated with Dainichi, rather than Amida. Again, in these accounts, no distinction appears to have been made between exoteric or esoteric practices. The individuals depicted simply engage at death in those practices and employ the particular *honzon* of their own preference, and a range of ritual, iconographic, and contemplative elements, including esoteric ones, is unproblematically assimilated to the goal of birth after death in the Pure Land.

All the examples discussed thus far suggest that there were no fixed boundaries between “esoteric adepts” and “Pure Land devotees”; the two categories overlapped to varying degrees and in different ways. There were esoteric practitioners such as Jōshō, who inclined increasingly toward the goal of *ōjō* as they grew older; self-described Pure Land aspirants, like several members of the Ni-jūgo Zanmai-e, who drew on the perceived power of esoteric ritual to ensure their attainment of *ōjō*; and others, like Kakuchō, who, all along, engaged actively in both modes of thought and practice and sometimes others as well.

Toward an Esoteric Style of Dying

A few *ōjōden* accounts and other hagiographical sources, however, clearly attempt to depict the “ideal death,” an incontrovertible proof of *ōjō*, in predominantly or even exclusively esoteric terms. For example, the monk Seien (d. ca. 1074–1077), a native of Izumo who had mastered the rites of the two maṇḍalas, dies sitting erect, forming the mantra of Dainichi and holding a five-pronged *vajra*; there is no mention of him going to a pure land.³² Such examples occur with somewhat greater frequency in accounts of the practitioners of Mt. Kōya, mentioned above. The monk Shōyo (d. 1167), formerly of Ninnaji but now a resident of Mt. Kōya, announces on the nine hundred ninety-ninth day of a thousand-day Fudō rite that he wishes to complete the entire rite now, because tomorrow he will “be born in the land of Esoteric Splendor.” Here, “the land of Eso-

teric Splendor" (*mitsugon kokudo*), the universal realm of Dainichi's enlightenment, is presented as a postmortem destination.³³ In another example, the monk Nōgan (n.d.) habitually recites both the *nenbutsu* and the esoteric sūtra *Rishukyō*; at death, he faces west and holds the five-colored cords but "with his mind, contemplates the teaching of the three secrets."³⁴ A particularly intriguing example is the account of the Kōya ascetic Rentai (d. 1098), a *Lotus Sūtra* reciter. One day, someone asks him, "Where have you fixed your aspirations—on [Amida's land of] Utmost Bliss or [Maitreya's Heaven of] Satisfaction?" Rentai responds in part that "the dharma realm is all suchness, so what particular land should I aspire to?" The day after his death, his disciple dreams that the Diamond Realm maṇḍala is unfurled in the sky, and seated in the moon disk of Muryōju Nyorai (Amida) in the space ordinarily occupied by the bodhisattva Saihōin is his master Rentai.³⁵ This dream is couched, not in the *raigō* imagery typical of most dreams recorded in Heian sources confirming a deceased person's *ōjō*—such as the purple clouds, other-worldly music, and subtle fragrance said to accompany Amida's welcoming descent—but in *mikkyō* iconography. It suggests that the deceased Rentai is indeed in Amida's land—not the remote pure land in the western direction but the "pure land" of the Diamond Realm maṇḍala, in which Amida and his attendants appear as expressions of the cosmic Buddha Dainichi. Without making explicit doctrinal claims, such stories draw on conventions of the Pure Land tradition and rework them in an esoteric mode.

An extremely interesting account, one of many legends concerning the famous poet-monk Saigyō (1118–1190), asserts the existence of a superior, esoteric posture to be observed in dying. Asked about the proper manner in which to die, Saigyō replies, "Those disciples who understand my inner enlightenment (*naishō*) will meet their death facing north. Those who do not know this inner enlightenment will die facing west." Saigyō himself, the narrative goes on to say, dies sitting upright in the posture of meditation, forming the dharma-realm mudrā and facing north. His disciples are distressed and say to one another, "The *hijiri* (holy man) always aspired to [be born in the Pure Land in] the western quarter, but now he is facing north. It must be the work of devils!" And they turn the body so that it is facing west, break the mudrā, and rearrange Saigyō's hands with the palms together in the *gasshō* gesture—the traditional death posture of Pure Land devotees. The narrative dismisses their ac-

tions as laughable. While Saigyō was outwardly like a *nenbutsu* practitioner, it explains, inwardly he had mastered the deepest secrets of both Shingon and Tendai *mikkyō* traditions; therefore he faced north and formed the dharma-realm mudrā, a posture that "returns to the source of the three secrets of the dharma realm" and "accords with the quiescent and luminous inner enlightenment that is without periphery or center."³⁶ This story postulates a distinctly "esoteric" death posture, recognized only by initiates and superior to that of conventional, exoteric deathbed practice.

Esoteric Instructions for Deathbed Practice

The uses of esoteric elements in deathbed practice reviewed thus far are not developed theoretically; practitioners for the most part simply ignored, or at least were not evidently troubled by, doctrinal tensions between notions of birth in a pure land, in which escape from *samsāra* is mediated by death, and the realization of buddhahood with this very body. Even in stories such as those of Seien, Rentai, or Saigyō, where the deathbed practice, posture, or auspicious post-mortem signs are clearly cast in an esoteric mode, little theoretical explanation is offered. This does not mean, however, that doctrinal theory was deemed unimportant. For some *mikkyō* scholars, the relationship between *ōjō* and *sokushin jōbutsu* was a problem that required clarifying, and they worked actively to reinterpret Pure Land ideas within an esoteric conceptual framework. Over and against the ethos of "loathing this defiled world and aspiring to the Pure Land," found in *ōjōden* and other Heian Pure Land literature, these Shingon teachers asserted that the Pure Land was inherent in the mind and that "*ōjō*" was not birth after death in a separate realm but the practitioner's union with the Buddha. Of course, they were by no means the first or only Buddhists to put forth non-dual explanations of the Pure Land.³⁷ The distinctive feature of their arguments lies in their assimilation of Pure Land elements to the esoteric three secrets practices of body, mouth, and mind. Not content merely to work out an esoteric mode of Pure Land thought on a theoretical level, they also produced concrete instructions for deathbed practice that explicitly reflected these esoteric interpretations.

Before turning to examples of these esoteric instructions for deathbed practice, however, let us briefly touch on the Pure Land model they were appropriating. As noted above, deathbed practices

aimed at birth in a pure land were first formally introduced to a Japanese readership in Genshin's *Ōjō yōshū*, which outlines *nen-butsu* practice for ordinary times; for special times, such as retreats; and for the moment of death. At the opening of the section on deathbed practice, Genshin cites the passage from the "Chinese tradition" (Ch. *Zhongguo benzhuān*) included in the Vinaya commentary of Daoxuan (596–667) in a section on "Attending to the Sick and Sending off the Dead," discussed by Koichi Shinohara in chapter 3 of this volume.³⁸ Following the purported conventions of the Jetavana Monastery in India in Śākyamuni Buddha's time, a dying monk is to be removed to a "hall of impermanence" (J. *mujōin*), so that the sight of his familiar surroundings and robe, bowl, and other possessions will not generate thoughts of attachment. There, he should be made to grasp a five-colored pennant fastened to the hand of a buddha image, to help him generate thoughts of following the Buddha to his pure realm.³⁹ As Shinohara notes, Daoxuan's instructions allow for aspiration to any number of buddha realms, but Genshin frames them in an explicitly Amidist mode. For example, he cites other Chinese predecessors specifically associated with Pure Land practices, such as Shandao (613–681), who recommends that dying persons should be made to face west, visualize the coming of the Buddha Amida to welcome them, and continually recite Amida's name,⁴⁰ and also Daochuo (562–645), who stresses the importance of helping the dying to sustain ten reflections on Amida, the minimum contemplation deemed necessary to achieve birth in his Pure Land.⁴¹ Genshin also adds his own recommendations, centering on exhortation to the dying to visualize Amida's physical marks, his radiant, embracing light, and his welcoming descent, together with his holy retinue, to escort the practitioner to the Pure Land. Deathbed practices welding the "Jetavana model" to aspirations for birth in Amida's land are also stipulated in the regulations of the Nijūgo Zanmai-e, whose members were among the first in Japan to conduct such rites in a formalized manner.⁴²

Jichihan: Deathbed Contemplation for the Shingon Practitioner

Genshin's instructions for deathbed practice were followed by other works of a similar intent. One of the earliest extant examples, about half a century after *Ōjō yōshū*, is the *Byōchū shugyō ki* (Notes on practice during illness) by the monk Jichihan (a.k.a. Jippan or

Jitsuhan, ca. 1089–1144), known as the founder of the temple Nakanokawa Jōjin'in in Nara and of the Nakanokawa branch of Shingon. Jichihan was versed in Hossō and Shingon teachings and was active in efforts to revive the monastic precepts; at one point, he also studied Tendai doctrine at the Yokawa precinct of Mt. Hiei, where he was exposed to Tendai Pure Land thought.⁴³ Jichihan was one of the earliest figures to interpret Pure Land ideas from an esoteric standpoint. His *Byōchū shugyō ki*, written during an illness in the winter of 1134, represents the first instructions for deathbed practice to be compiled in Japan in an esoteric mode.⁴⁴ In its concluding passage, Jichihan writes:

[The manner of conducting] a ritual such as this should depend on the individual's inclination. What I have written above is intended solely for myself. Although displaying a holy image and having [the dying person] revere it and hold a colored pennant [affixed to its hand], etc. represent the tradition of the Jetavana Monastery set forth in the Mahāyāna scriptures, these protocols may be adapted according to the occasion and need not necessarily be insisted upon.⁴⁵

This suggests both that the ritual forms of deathbed practice introduced by Genshin were by this time well known in monastic circles and that they were not the first object of Jichihan's concern. What interested him was how the Shingon practitioner should practice at the time of death. While space limitations preclude a detailed review of all the *Byōchū shugyō ki*'s eight articles, let us briefly consider the distinctively esoteric elements in Jichihan's instructions.

One compelling concern of virtually all *rinjū gyōgi* texts is maintaining right mindfulness at the moment of death. As explained in Shinohara's chapter, throughout the Buddhist world, one's thought at the last moment was believed to exert a determinative influence over one's postmortem fate. The *Guanwuliangshou jing*, or *Contemplation Sūtra*, one of the major Pure Land scriptures, says that even evil persons, if able at the time of death to form ten consecutive thoughts of Amida and invoke his name, will thereby eradicate eight billion kalpas of sinful deeds and achieve birth in the Pure Land. However, by the same logic, it was also thought that even a devout practitioner, by a stray deluded thought at the last moment, could in effect negate the merit of a lifetime's practice and plunge

into the lower realms. Thus the ability to focus one's mind at this juncture was considered crucial.⁴⁶ Jichihan recommends that the Shingon practitioner should always contemplate the deity Fudō Myōō, relying on him to achieve right mindfulness and sustain the aspiration for enlightenment (*bodaishin*) in one's final hours. Fudō is one of the "wisdom king" (*myōō*) deities incorporated into *mikkyō* as a protector. He is often depicted in a fearsome aspect, glaring and tusked, holding a sword to sever delusions and a noose to restrain the passions. "The protection of this wisdom king extends even to realizing the fruit of buddhahood, which is distant," Jichihan writes. "How could he, in his compassionate vow, abandon [practitioners] at the time of death, which is close at hand?"⁴⁷ While it is not clear whether or not this was Jichihan's innovation, reliance on Fudō's protection in one's last hours would become a standard feature of virtually all subsequent Shingon deathbed ritual instructions.

Like Genshin's *Ōjō yōshū* and other *rinjū gyōgi* texts, the *Byōchū shugyō ki* recommends that the dying person perform repentance (*sange*) to remove various karmic hindrances that might obstruct one at the time of death. Performing repentance shortly before death seems to have been widespread in Heian Japan, and various methods were used, such as the Lotus repentance rite.⁴⁸ Jichihan recommends in particular the efficacy of esoteric spells, such as the Superlative Dhāraṇī of the Buddha's Crown, the Mantra of Light, or the Amida spell. As we have seen, some *ōjōden* accounts mention the recitation of these and other spells as well as the *nenbutsu* at the time of death, both to remove karmic hindrances and to ward off demonic influences; as Hayami has noted, such practices reflect a widespread understanding of the powers of Buddhist incantatory language that did not necessarily differentiate between "Pure Land" and "esoteric" doctrinal categories. Jichihan, however, provides an explicitly esoteric doctrinal explanation: All such recitations are to be performed as part of three secrets practice for uniting the practitioner's body, mouth, and mind with those of the Buddha. One should form the appropriate mudrā with the hands, chant the mantra or dhāraṇī in question with the mouth, and contemplate that mantra with the mind, firmly believing that its essence is the fundamental syllable *ḥ*, the originally unborn, and that all sins will thereby be eradicated. Or one can simply contemplate the true aspect in accordance with the esoteric teachings, which

will lead to the liberating insight that deluded karmic actions, arising through conditions, are without fixed form and thus inseparable from the originally unborn dharma realm.⁴⁹

Jichihan then proceeds to provide an esoteric version of the deathbed contemplation of Amida and his Pure Land set forth by Genshin and his Chinese predecessors. The practitioner must direct his thoughts to Amida, defined here as the "lord of the lotus section," one of the five divisions of the "perfected body" assembly of the Diamond Realm maṇḍala. As for his realm, it is "a land in the western quarter, whose name is Perfect Bliss." It appears here that Jichihan is referring, not to a pure land billions of world-spheres away, but to the lotus section, located west of center in the Diamond Realm maṇḍala, over which Amida presides.⁵⁰ Jichihan goes on to describe this land in distinctively esoteric terms; for example, it is composed of the five elements, and its ground, of the seven precious substances. By the empowerment of the syllable *ḥṛīḥ*, which is the seed syllable of Amida, the waters, birds, trees, and forests of that land all preach the dharma. Above the Buddha's throne is a moon disk, and upon the moon disk is a lotus; upon the lotus disk is a seed syllable that transforms into the symbolic form (*sanmayagyō*) of the object of worship, the Buddha Amida. That Buddha's body is as many *yojanas* in height as six billion *nayutas* times the number of sands in the Ganges River and possesses eighty-four thousand marks, each with an equal number of excellent qualities, each of which in turn radiates eighty-four thousand rays of light. As Amida's dharma body has four aspects, so does his land. By his supernatural powers, he will appear in differing ways to people of varying capacity, but all these manifestations are in essence equal. In short, the contemplation of Amida recommended here is not meditation on an external savior who will descend and escort the practitioner to his distant pure land but an esoteric visualization sequence in which contemplating, internalizing, and mentally transmuting iconographic imagery serves as the vehicle for realizing one's own identity with the Buddha. Jichihan makes this quite explicit:

Because there is no discrimination in the single great dharma realm, know clearly that this Buddha is precisely one's own mind. Now, in contemplating the Buddha who is our own mind, know too that his land is also our mind. Truly we will be born into that

[pure] land that is none other than our mind. The one who contemplates and that which is contemplated, the one who achieves birth and the place where that person is born, are in no way separate from the single great dharma realm.⁵¹

Continuing his contemplation instructions, Jichihan suggests that the practitioner should visualize the syllable *hūm* between Amida's brows and envision it transforming into the physical mark of the white curl (Skt. *ūrṇā*; J. *byakugō*), turning to the right, large as five Mt. Sumerus and emitting eighty-four thousand rays of light. Genshin too, in his *Ōjō yōshū*, had emphasized visualization of the radiant light emanating from the white curl between Amida's brows, embracing practitioners and enabling them to eradicate sin, focus their deathbed contemplation, and achieve birth in the Pure Land.⁵² Jichihan, however, suggests not only that the white curl should be visualized as a transformation of the letter *hūm* but also that it is endowed with Amida's four inseparable maṇḍalas: Its pure white color corresponds to the great maṇḍala (*daimandara*); its beneficial manifestations, to the *sanmaya* maṇḍala (*sanmaya mandara*); the insight it produces in becoming a norm of conduct, to the dharma maṇḍala (*hō mandara*); and its light embracing all living beings, to the karma maṇḍala (*katsuma mandara*).⁵³ In discussing the meaning of the light emanating from this curl and embracing devotees, Jichihan draws on Shandao, who addresses this topic in some detail in his commentary on the *Contemplation Sūtra*;⁵⁴ however, as Ōtani Teruo has noted, Jichihan also carefully elides those phrases in Shandao's commentary that suggest a dualistic contrast between a transcendent buddha and the deluded beings who are saved. In short, Jichihan assimilates Shandao's authority as a Pure Land master to an esoteric reading of Pure Land teachings in which the Buddha and the beings are non-dual.⁵⁵ Finally, he says, the practitioner should pray to be embraced and brought to awakening by the light emanating from the object of worship (= Amida) that is ultimately identical to one's own mind.

A particular innovation of Jichihan's is his redefinition of the deathbed *nenbutsu* as a form of empowerment through practice of the three secrets (*sanmitsu kaji*), or ritual union with the body, mouth, and mind of an esoteric deity. As Genshin had done for *nenbutsu* practice in his *Ōjō yōshū*, Jichihan similarly defines *sanmitsu* practice for three kinds of occasions, focusing in particular on the

basic esoteric practice of a-syllable meditation (*ajikan*). The first letter in the Sanskrit syllabary, *a* was considered to represent the "originally unborn" (*ādyanutpāda*, *honpushō*), the true nature of the dharmas.⁵⁶ Jichihan's first method, for everyday use, is a traditional three secrets practice in which the practitioner forms the basic mudrā corresponding to the object of worship, recites its basic mantra, and contemplates that mantra as embodying the three inseparable meanings of the syllable *a*—empty (*kū*), existing (*u*), and originally unborn (*honpushō*)—which constitute the dharma body and are identical to the mind of the practitioner. "Because of inconceivable emptiness, the karmic hindrances one has created are destroyed in accordance with the teaching. Because of inconceivable existence, the Pure Land toward which one aspires is achieved in accordance with one's vows. What is called the 'unborn' is the Middle Way. And because of the Middle Way, there are no fixed aspects of either karmic hindrances or the Pure Land."⁵⁷ Jichihan's second kind of *sanmitsu* practice, intended for "when one has extra time, or is physically weak," begins his assimilation of the *nenbutsu* to a-syllable meditation. Here, the practitioner's reverent posture is the paradigmatic "secret of the body"; in this light, all movements of the body are mudrās. Chanting Amida's name is the paradigmatic "secret of the mouth," and on this basis, all words and speech are mantras. The "secret of the mind" is contemplating the meaning of this name, both as a whole phrase (*kugi*) and as three individual syllables (*jigi*). As a whole, it signifies *amṛta* (J. *kanro*), meaning that the Buddha has freed himself from all hindrances, fevers, and poisons, reaching the cool of nirvāṇa, and causes all beings who contemplate his name to become equal to himself. Individually, the three characters in the name "Amida" are equated by Jichihan with three fundamental esoteric meanings of the letter *a*: *A* indicating the originally unborn, which is the Middle Way; *mi*, the great self that is without self and enjoys perfect freedom; and *da*, moment-to-moment accordance with suchness, which is liberation.⁵⁸ Jichihan's third kind of *sanmitsu* practice, to be employed for the moment of death, is a greatly simplified form of what he has already outlined: one should form the mudrā of the object of worship (Amida), chant his name, and single-mindedly take refuge in the myriad virtues of the Middle Way. Here, the elements of visualization and contemplation are vastly simplified, while that of invocation is paramount. Jichihan's synthesis of the *nenbutsu* and the esoteric a-syllable medi-

tation in the context of deathbed practice would be developed by later Shingon figures such as Kakuban and Dōhan and also by teachers of other Buddhist traditions.⁵⁹

Jichihan's Pure Land thought developed over time, and the *Byōchū shugyō ki* may not represent his final word on the subject. Some evidence suggests that, like the esoteric practitioners mentioned above, Jichihan in later life may have framed his postmortem aspirations in terms of birth in Amida's realm.⁶⁰ In this writing, however, practice at the time of death is in essence an esoteric three secrets rite for realizing *sokushin jōbutsu* through ritual union with Amida Buddha. Because in this text Jichihan neither explicitly denies exoteric understandings of the Pure Land nor clarifies the relationship between Amida and Dainichi, the cosmic buddha of the Shingon teachings, and because he draws extensively on exoteric sources, such as the works of Shandao and Genshin, some sectarian scholars have been critical of the work as overly indebted to Tendai thought and not sufficiently aligned with Shingon orthodoxy.⁶¹ However, such criticisms overlook how thoroughly the *Byōchū shugyō ki* appropriates Pure Land elements—including Amidist imagery, visualizations, and the deathbed *nenbutsu*—to the non-dual conceptual structure of esoteric three secrets practice.

To a modern sensibility, it might seem counter-intuitive to speak of achieving *sokushin jōbutsu* at the moment of death: What would "realizing buddhahood with this very body" mean if that body was about to perish? We would be wrong, however, to assume that *sokushin jōbutsu* (and its ritual-symbolic apparatus) necessarily implied a purely "this-worldly" orientation. Jichihan's *Byōchū shugyō ki* is not the only text to suggest that this goal might be realized at death, or even after.⁶² The distinction drawn by Heian esoteric thinkers such as Jichihan between *sokushin jōbutsu* and *ōjō* was not exclusively or even predominately one of this-worldly versus other-worldly attainments but is more fruitfully understood in other terms. From an esoteric standpoint, the idea of realizing *sokushin jōbutsu* at life's end would of course have been deemed superior to *ōjō*, in that it assimilates the ideal death to the non-dual stance of *mikkyō* doctrine, in contrast to notions of "going" to a separate pure land, which are easily characterized in dualistic terms; moreover, *sokushin jōbutsu* represents full buddhahood, where *ōjō* was understood as merely a stage, although a decisive one, in buddhahood's attainment. But perhaps even more important, *sokushin jō-*

butsu was a state to be achieved *with this body*, the fleshly body born of father and mother, unlike birth in the Pure Land, which is accomplished only in discarding the present body and assuming a more ethereal one. One imagines that for some self-identified esoteric practitioners, positing *sokushin jōbutsu* as a goal to be realized at life's last moment may have represented a reassertion of the embodied, somatic character of esoteric practice and attainment, over and against more "spiritualized" notions of attainment inherent in the idea of *ōjō*.

Kakuban: Deathbed Practice as Ritual Performance

A second important manual of deathbed practice in an esoteric mode is the *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū* (Collection of secret essentials for a lifetime) by Kakuban (1095–1143), founder of the Daidenbōin lineage of Shingon and systematizer of Kūkai's teachings.⁶³ He and his followers left Mt. Kōya owing to conflict with the monks of Kongōbuji, the main temple of the mountain, and established themselves at Mt. Negoro; their branch of the tradition would later become known as "new doctrine" (*shingi*) Shingon.⁶⁴ Kakuban is arguably the most important Shingon thinker after Kūkai; he is also the key figure in the development of the strand of Shingon thought that later came to be known as *himitsu nenbutsu*, the secret or esoteric *nenbutsu*, which interprets Pure Land elements from a Shingon doctrinal standpoint. His *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū* in nine articles was clearly inspired by Jichihan's *Byōchū shugyō ki*, which it cites explicitly.⁶⁵ This fixes its date of composition in the latter part of Kakuban's life, between 1134, when the *Byōchū shugyō ki* was written, and Kakuban's death in 1143. However, its perspective differs in significant respects from Jichihan's.

The text opens by stressing the critical importance of the last moment, when even evil persons can potentially escape *samsāra*, as well as the efficacy of esoteric ritual and meditative practice in bringing about the mental focus necessary to achieve this:

Birth in the Pure Land in any of the nine grades depends on right mindfulness at the last moment. Those who seek buddhahood should master this attitude. . . . By following these protocols for the last moment, even monks and nuns who have violated the precepts are sure to obtain birth in the Pure Land, and lay men and women who have performed evil deeds will also surely be born in [the land

of] Utmost Bliss. How much more so, in the case of [those monks and nuns] who have wisdom and keep the precepts, or of lay men and women who are virtuous! This is the ultimate point of the mantras and secret contemplations. Believe deeply and do not doubt!⁶⁶

Like Jichihan, Kakuban stresses the efficacy of mantras and dhāraṇīs in removing karmic hindrances at the hour of death. He also adopted the idea of deathbed contemplation as a form of three secrets practice, based on either the A-syllable contemplation or the closely related moon-disk contemplation. Kakuban regarded these contemplations as “two but not two,” and *ajikan* and *gachirinkan* were often combined in his thought and practice.⁶⁷ Here, he says that they enable the practitioner to arouse the *samādhi bodhicitta* (*sanmaji bodaishin*), in which one perfects the three secrets and thus realizes identity with the cosmic buddha.⁶⁸ “If [the dying person] forms the mudrā proper to the object of worship and contemplates the Buddha by means of mantra (*shingon nenbutsu*), performing the three secrets without flagging, then that is itself the sign of certain birth in the Pure Land.”⁶⁹

Where Jichihan’s *Byōchū shugyō ki* is concerned exclusively with the question of how the Shingon practitioner should meditate at the time of death, Kakuban also emphasizes how the Shingon adept should ritually assist others at that juncture. A large portion of his instruction is addressed, not to the dying person, but to the *zenchishiki* (Skt. *kalyāṇamitra*, a “good friend” or Buddhist teacher), here meaning those ritual specialists who attend the dying and assist their practice at the end. In effect, the *Himitsu shū* assimilates deathbed practice to the esoteric rites performed by *mikkyō* adepts on behalf of their aristocratic patrons.

Kakuban repeats the by now familiar conventions of deathbed practice that Genshin had introduced: one should remove the dying person to a separate room or hall, enshrine a buddha image—usually the dying person’s personal *honzon*—and burn incense; those who have been drinking alcohol or eating meat or the five pungent roots should be kept away.⁷⁰ The dying person is to have secured in advance a promise of assistance from several *zenchishiki*, whose duties and qualifications are clearly specified. The first should “by all means be a person of wisdom, with aspiration for the way.” The dying person should imagine this individual as the bodhisattva

Kannon, come to lead him to the Pure Land. This *zenchishiki* should sit close to the dying person, to the west and slightly south, roughly in line with that person’s navel. He should keep his eyes fixed on the dying person’s face and abide in a spirit of compassionate protectiveness, chanting in harmony with that person. A second *zenchishiki*, someone of long experience and training in practice, should take up his station on the other side of the sick person, near his head—that is, to the east and slightly north—at a distance of about three *shaku*. His task is to recite the mantra of Fudō to ward off demonic attacks or other malign influences that might disturb the dying person’s concentration. A third *zenchishiki* should also be positioned to the north, if space permits, or in some other convenient place and strike the gong to set the pace of the chanting. Two more attendants may be on hand to attend to necessities. When the chanting reaches a particular melodic cadence (*J. gassatsu*), all four should join in at the same pitch. “This is the deathbed ceremony for one who seeks the enlightenment of the five kinds of wisdom,” Kakuban says. In short, the deathbed scene is to be arranged in a mandalic structure: the four *zenchishiki* assisting the dying person take up their stations around him so that together they reproduce the configuration of the five wisdom buddhas, the dying person occupying the central position of Dainichi.⁷¹

Kakuban’s instructions for practice at the end of life are the first to address explicitly the problem of dying persons who are distracted by pain, mentally confused, or even unconscious and thus unable to form a mindful and liberating “last thought.” If the sick person becomes disoriented because of extreme pain, Kakuban says, that person should be made to place the palms together and face the buddha image. It may also happen that although life still remains, the sick person lapses into a state like a feverish sleep and barely breathes. At such a time, the *zenchishiki* are to observe his breathing carefully and match their breathing to his, chanting the *nenbutsu* in unison on the outbreath, for a day, two days, seven days, or as long as necessary until death transpires, never abandoning the dying person even for a moment. “The rite for persons on their deathbed always ends with the outbreath,” Kakuban warns. “You should be ready for the last breath and chant the *nenbutsu* in unison.” In this way, the dying person can be freed of sins and achieve the Pure Land, because—even when he himself may have ceased to breathe—the attendants chant the *nenbutsu* on his behalf,

and Amida's original vow must inevitably respond to the invocation of his name. Moreover, the *zenchishiki* are to visualize their *nenbutsu*, chanted on the outbreath, as the six syllables NA-MO-A-MI-TA-VUḤ in Sanskrit letters, entering the dying person's mouth with the inbreath, transforming into six sun disks, and dispelling with their brilliance the darkness of the obstructions of sins associated with the six sense faculties.⁷² This represents Kakuban's esoteric reading of the "meditation on the [setting] sun" (*nissōkan*), the first of sixteen meditations for achieving birth in Amida's Pure Land set forth in the *Contemplation Sūtra*.⁷³ This synthesis of the *nenbutsu* with esoteric breath meditation and visualization techniques seems to have been Kakuban's innovation.⁷⁴ In other writings, Kakuban interprets Amida, conflated with the originally unborn syllable A, as the breath of life itself; with each outbreath, one "returns one's life" (*kimyō*, the translation of "Namu" or Sanskrit "Namo-") to Amida. With this awareness, the act of breathing itself becomes the continuous *nenbutsu*—an idea that would influence subsequent esoteric readings of the *nenbutsu* and also spread beyond Shingon circles.⁷⁵

Kakuban further calls for the *zenchishiki*'s immediate ritual intervention should the death be accompanied by inauspicious signs. Kakuban draws here on a passage from the Chinese esoteric scripture *Shouhu guojiezhu tuoluoni jing* (Sūtra of dhāraṇīs for protecting the nation and the ruler), which enumerates fifteen signs that the dying will fall into the hells (such as crying aloud with grief or choking with tears, urinating or defecating without awareness, refusing to open the eyes, foul breath, or lying face down); eight signs that the dying will fall into the realm of hungry ghosts (such as burning with fever or suffering from hunger or thirst); and five signs presaging a descent into the bestial realm (such as contorting of the hands and feet, foaming at the mouth, or sweating from the entire body).⁷⁶ For each of these categories of corporeal signs, Kakuban specifies what sort of ritual counter-action should be performed. For example, having observed any of the signs that the newly deceased person will fall into the hells, the *zenchishiki* should immediately act to rescue that individual by performing the Buddha Eye, Golden Wheel, Shō Kannon or Jizō rituals. Sculpted or painted images should be made of the buddhas or bodhisattas to whom these rites are directed and offerings made to them. Or one may recite the *Rishukyō*, the names of the fifty-three buddhas, or the Jeweled Casket or Superlative Spell, or the Mantra of Light, or perform the Jeweled Pavilion (*hōrō*) rite, or recite the "Bodhisattva Preaching

Verses" chapter of the *Flower Ornament Sūtra*, or the *Lotus Sūtra*, and so forth, as especially efficacious in saving that person from the pains of the hells.⁷⁷ Kakuban's instructions thus not only concern the moment of death but also extend into the realm of post-mortem rites. With his *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū*, deathbed practice became no longer a matter merely of the dying individual's contemplation but a ritual service performed by an adept on a patron's behalf. The development of ritual procedures specific to Shingon deathbed rites did not stop with Jichihan and Kakuban but continued throughout the medieval period; eventually, such rites were extended to funeral procedures as well.⁷⁸

A Double Logic

In addition to his ritual innovations, Kakuban also developed the theoretical aspects of deathbed practice from his *mikkyō* perspective, drawing a clear, hierarchical distinction between exoteric and esoteric understandings of the Pure Land. For example, he paraphrases the views of the esoteric master Shanwuwei (Śubhakarasiṃha, 637–735) as follows:

The exoteric teachings say that [the land of] Utmost Bliss is a buddha land lying tens of billions of [world spheres] away to the west. Its buddha is [A]mida, who has realized the fruit of enlightenment from his practice as the monk Hōzō (Skt. Dharmakāra). But the esoteric teachings say that the pure lands of the ten directions are all the land of a single buddha, and all the tathāgatas are the body of a single buddha.⁷⁹

To which Kakuban adds:

Apart from this Sahā world, there is no land of Utmost Bliss to contemplate. How could it be separated by tens of billions of other lands? And apart from Dainichi, there is no separate [buddha] Amida... Amida is Dainichi's function as wisdom. Dainichi is Amida's essence as principle... When one contemplates in this way, then, without leaving the Sahā world, one is immediately born in [the pure land of] Utmost Bliss. One's own person enters Amida, and Amida, without transformation, becomes Dainichi. One's own person emerges from Dainichi; this is the subtle contemplation for realizing buddhahood with this very body.⁸⁰

In that it defines Amida as an aspect of the cosmic buddha, Dainichi Nyorai; draws on esoteric sources; and explicitly repudiates the notion of a separate pure land in the west, Kakuban's *Himitsu shū* has often been regarded among Shingon sectarian scholars and others as embodying a more "orthodox" esoteric position than Jichihan's *Byōchū shugyō ki*.⁸¹ Alternatively, Kakuban is said to have effected a true synthesis of *mikkyō* and Pure Land elements, in contrast to Jichihan, whose deathbed ritual has been characterized as "a single-deity rite (*isson hō*) of Amida aiming at *sokushin jōbutsu*" in which "a fusion of the ideas of *ōjō* and *sokushin jōbutsu* is not attempted."⁸² Setting aside such hierarchical evaluations of the two works, one does indeed note a difference in perspective between them. Where Jichihan fully assimilates deathbed practice to an esoteric three secrets ritual for realizing one's identity with Amida Buddha, Kakuban maintains that same non-dual perspective but also treats the idea of going to the Pure Land as at least a provisionally real event. Ironically, while Kakuban's *Himitsu shū* has often been deemed more consistent with Shingon orthodoxy than Jichihan's *Byōchū shugyō ki*, it makes a greater accommodation than does Jichihan's deathbed text for notions of the Pure Land as a distinct realm apart from this world.

Kakuban's acknowledgment of two distinct soteriological goals in effect produces a double logic that runs throughout the text. On the one hand, the *Himitsu shū* stresses the inseparability of the Buddha and the Pure Land with the person of the practitioner: by contemplating this non-duality, "without leaving the *Sahā* world, one is immediately born in [the pure land of] Utmost Bliss." Yet on the other hand, it promises at the very outset a method to escape *samsāra* and achieve "birth in the Pure Land in any of the nine grades," and its ritual instructions to the *zenchishiki* are clearly aimed at negotiating a safe transit for the dying person from this world to a desirable postmortem realm. This oscillation between the two perspectives is also mirrored in the text's claims about what stage practitioners of varying capacities may expect to achieve. For example, in discussing the merits of the *A*-syllable contemplation, Kakuban writes, "Those of shallow contemplation and limited practice shall, without discarding their present body, achieve the highest grade of superior birth in the Pure Land, while those of deep cultivation and great assiduity shall, without transformation of their present mind, become great radiant Dainichi of [the realm of] Eso-

teric Splendor"; but he also states, "By relying solely on this contemplation and not cultivating other practices, [even] a negligent person of small capacity can fulfill the great aspiration for birth in the next life in the Pure Land, while an assiduous person of great capacity shall obtain the *siddhi* of realizing buddhahood with this present body."⁸³ Both passages subsume the goals of birth in the Pure Land and the direct realization of innate buddhahood within the same *A*-syllable practice, although establishing a clear hierarchy between them. But nonetheless an inconsistency remains: On one hand, to achieve birth in the Pure Land "without discarding their present body" suggests that "birth in the Pure Land" is a level of attainment, albeit an inferior one, to be realized within the limits of this life; on the other, to "fulfill the great aspiration for birth in the next life in the Pure Land" clearly indicates a postmortem goal.

These discrepancies have exercised generations of Shingon exegetes, who, since early modern times, have debated whether Kakuban did in some sense acknowledge birth in a separate pure land as a provisional goal or whether he used this term in an ultimately non-dual sense to denote an achievement inferior to buddhahood but still to be realized with this present body. With minor variations, the present consensus of sectarian scholars assimilates the *Himitsu shū*'s promise of "birth in the next life in the Pure Land" to a non-dual *sokushin jōbutsu* position and seems strongly disinclined to entertain the possibility that Kakuban might have actually been referring to birth after death in a separate realm; *ōjō* is read, for example, as a "skillful means," a concession to the widespread Pure Land beliefs of his day, or is interpreted as "birth" in Dainichi Nyorai's all-pervading "land of esoteric splendor" as an interim stage leading to *sokushin jōbutsu*.⁸⁴ The advantage of such readings is that they iron out inconsistencies in the text; indeed, the "reconciliation of contradictions" (*eshaku* or *etsū*) has always been seen as a major task of traditional exegesis. Nonetheless, sectarian orthodoxy represents only one possible approach to the text, and one can also read Kakuban's *Himitsu shū* in a way that not only acknowledges its inconsistencies but also sees them as an interpretive strategy. From this perspective, the *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū* brings together the two elements—going to the Pure Land (*ōjō*) and realizing buddhahood with this very body (*sokushin jōbutsu*)—not in a way that attempts to reconcile them or subsume one within the other, but in a dynamic tension: on one hand dismantling the very

idea of birth in a separate pure land while at the same time prescribing the most efficacious ritual techniques for achieving it. Perhaps because the *Himitsu shū* deals with the specific ritual requirements of the deathbed, in this work, at least, Kakuban's intellectual commitment to non-dual Shingon orthodoxy does not seem to have led him to abandon the notion of death as a potent and possibly dangerous transition to another realm, one whose passage could be negotiated by proper meditative and ritual techniques—especially by the superior meditative and ritual techniques of the esoteric repertoire.⁸⁵

One finds a similar oscillation between the two perspectives in another deathbed ritual text, the *Rinjū yōjin no koto* (Admonitions for the time of death) by the later esoteric figure Dōhan (1178–1252).⁸⁶ On the one hand, like Jichihan and Kakuban before him, Dōhan recommends a form of three secrets practice for the practitioner's last hours, centered on the contemplation of some form of non-duality:

The syllable A as existence arising through conditions corresponds to birth. The syllable A as the emptiness of non-arising corresponds to death. Thus dying in one place and being born in another is nothing other than the letter A. . . . This is why Vairocana takes this single syllable as his mantra. . . . Birth and death are nothing other than the transformations of the six elements transmigrating in accordance with conditions. Buried, one becomes dust and is no different from the great earth of the syllable A. Cremated, one becomes smoke and is equal to the wisdom fire of the syllable RA. In contemplating the non-transformation of the six elements, there is no longer arising and perishing, only the naturally inherent four maṇḍalas that are the buddha essence.⁸⁷

Yet at the very same time, Dōhan urges the practitioner, at the hour of death, to offer a vow before an image of Kūkai, the Shingon founder, and implore the aid of his empowerment in reaching the Pure Land of Utmost Bliss.⁸⁸ Here too we see a tension, or double logic, in which practice at the last moment is seen both as a ritually controlled transition from the present realm to a pure land *and* in terms of a non-dual metaphysics in which the separate existence of such a pure land must be rejected. The Pure Land conceptual framework that dominated Heian Buddhist approaches to death is

thus assimilated to a *mikkyō* orientation on two fronts: deathbed *practice* for achieving birth in the Pure Land becomes esoteric practice, while the Pure Land into which that birth is to be achieved is reconceived in non-dual esoteric terms.⁸⁹

A Minority View

Although their perspectives differed, both Jichihan and Kakuban saw aspiration for the Pure Land—however the “Pure Land” might have been defined—and also deathbed practice as compatible with non-dual esoteric thought. A very different view appears in the *Kakukai Hōkyō hōgo* (Bridge of the Law Kakukai's discourse on the dharma), a short sermon-like tract (*hōgo*) recording the teachings of the Shingon master Nanshō-bō Kakukai (1142–1223).⁹⁰ Kakukai served from 1217 to 1220 as the thirty-seventh superintendent of the Kongōbuji on Mt. Kōya. Little is known of him, though he had many gifted disciples, including the above-mentioned Dōhan. This one surviving work of his, the *Hōgo*, rejects both aspiration to specific pure lands and formalized deathbed ritual as fundamentally inconsistent with the insight that the whole universe is Dainichi Nyorai's realm.

Kakukai begins by asserting that “those who truly aspire to unexcelled enlightenment (Skt. bodhi) in accordance with this [Shingon] teaching do not consider in the least where they will be reborn or in what form.” This is because, for one awakened to the originally unborn nature of the dharmas, all places are the pure land that is Dainichi's practice hall of Esoteric Splendor (*mitsugon dōjō*). From this perspective, Kakukai argues that the entire notion of fixing one's aspirations on a particular postmortem destination is misguided:

When we thoroughly contemplate the arising and perishing of the dharmas, in truth we cannot be one-sidedly attached to [Maîtreya's] Heaven of Satisfaction, nor to [Amida's land of] Utmost Bliss. . . . If we simply purify the mind, we shall not feel pain, even if we should assume the forms of such [lowly] creatures as dragons and yakṣas. . . . Our partiality for the human form and our bias against the strange forms of other creatures is due to our lack of understanding. Regardless of transmigration, we shall suffer no discomfort.⁹¹

This position leads Kakukai also to reject formalized conventions of deathbed practice designed to control and direct ritually one's passage to the next life, including the attendance in one's last hours of a *zenchishiki*, or religious guide. He continues:

Nor do I consider what kind of *mudrā* to make at the moment of death. Depending on my state of mind, I can abide [in right mindfulness] in any of the four postures [walking, standing, sitting, or lying down]. What kind of action is not *samādhi*? Every thought and every utterance are meditations (*kannen*) and mantras (*shingon*) of attainment (*siddhi*, *shitsuji*). . . . The practitioner should simply chant the a syllable with each breath and mentally contemplate the true aspect, [that all things] arise in accordance with conditions. The circumstances of our final moments are by no means known to others, and even good friends (*zenchishiki*) will be no help to us. Since one's own and others' thoughts are separate, even if they perform the same contemplation, others' thoughts are likely to differ from one's own. . . . I think it is quite splendid to die as did the likes of [the recluse] Gochi-bō, abiding in a correct state of mind with his final moments unknown to any others.⁹²

If we judge solely by this passage, Kakukai does not seem to have regarded death as a unique juncture with its own distinctive dangers and opportunities, requiring mediation by special ritual forms; the simple contemplation of non-duality and interdependent arising is sufficient at the moment of death as it is throughout life. Indeed, from the *Hōgo's* perspective, to fix one's aspirations for the next life on any specific realm is a form of delusion, betraying one's ignorance that all places and forms are inseparable from Dainichi's practice hall of Esoteric Splendor.

Was the *Hōgo's* rejection of specific postmortem aspirations and formal deathbed practices made in a particular polemical context? Or was it a statement of Kakukai's abiding personal conviction? Did he in fact act on it in his last moments? Given the lack of reliable biographical information, it is hard to know how to locate this text in the larger framework of his thought.⁹³ In any event, Kakukai's *Hōgo* is atypical, not in its assertion of an immanent pure land—a common enough doctrinal position—but in its extension of the implications of that position to negate both aspirations for

the Pure Land as a postmortem goal and ritualized deathbed practice for achieving it. In this, it is as anomalous as it is logically consistent.

Conclusion

As we have seen above, in Japan's Heian period, esoteric elements were freely and variously incorporated into practices aimed at birth in the Pure Land, usually without theoretical explanation. Many self-defined Pure Land devotees used esoteric contemplations, spells, icons, and so forth in both their deathbed rites and other practices conducted in preparation for the afterlife. And even individuals accomplished in esoteric ritual and meditation frequently framed their postmortem aspirations in terms of birth in Amida's Pure Land. What this suggests is not so much that practice proceeded in disregard of doctrine, as that our own understanding of how doctrine was appropriated may be insufficient. Under the influence of modern sectarian studies, doctrinal systems have come to be defined in rigid, mutually exclusive terms that often belie the permeable, fluid character of denominational categories in the pre-modern period. Representations of *mikkyō* as "this-worldly" or "world affirming," over and against an "other-worldly" or "world-denying" Pure Land tradition, are especially problematic. Though not highlighted in Kūkai's teachings, the promise of birth in a pure land as a benefit of esoteric practice featured in a number of esoteric sūtras and ritual manuals, and in Japan, as on the Asian continent, *ōjō* represented a generic goal, crossing all boundaries of school and lineage.

A detailed investigation of why the particular soteriological goal of *ōjō* came to predominate—as opposed, say, to direct realization of buddhahood—would require a separate essay. One may imagine that a majority of practitioners saw the ultimate achievement of realizing buddhahood as beyond their capacity. In addition, despite its grounding in sophisticated Mahāyāna non-dual metaphysics, the doctrine of *sokushin jōbutsu* lacks a clear explanation of "what happens" after death and thus, one imagines, might have proved emotionally or even cognitively inadequate in confronting one's own death or the death of close associates. Narratives about going to Amida's Pure Land may in this regard have provided a more attrac-

tive basis for conceptualizing postmortem aspirations. Some esoteric practitioners, however, sought to imbue the ideal of a liberative death, dominated at the time by Pure Land thought and imagery, with a distinctively *mikkyō* character; hence the idea of special, esoteric postures to be adopted in death, such as facing north or forming a mudrā associated with Dainichi. And some *mikkyō* scholars addressed on a conceptual level the tensions between the goals of *sokushin jōbutsu* and birth in the Pure Land. Both moves come together in the Shingon instructions for deathbed practice discussed above. Jichihan's *Byōchū shugyō ki* and the *Kakukai Hōkyō hōgo* both resolve the tension between the two soteriological goals in favor of non-dual enlightenment, denying the very idea of "going" to a separate pure land. But they do so in dramatically contrasting ways. In Jichihan's text, while appropriating the chanted *nenbutsu* and other Amidist elements, deathbed practice becomes a meditation ritual for realizing union with the Buddha; any notion of the Pure Land as a separate realm is thoroughly subsumed within what is essentially an empowerment rite for realizing *sokushin jōbutsu*. *Kakukai's Hōgo* adopts the same non-dual perspective but directs it toward a different conclusion altogether, one in which insight into the omnipresence of Dainichi Nyorai's realm must entail a rejection of both aspiration to any specific pure land and any special form of deathbed practice. In marked contrast to both these works, however, *Kakuban's Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū* allows the tension between the two goals to stand, both maintaining a non-dual perspective in which the Buddha does not exist apart from one's own mind and yet also according notions of "going to the Pure Land" at least a provisional validity. This produces a double logic in which non-dual esoteric doctrine is used to repudiate the concept of birth in the Pure Land as a separate realm, even as esoteric practice is offered as the most efficacious vehicle for achieving it. The result is a dynamic tension in which the two perspectives are asserted concurrently and the opposition between them allowed to stand. While perhaps not as conceptually consistent as either Jichihan's *Byōchū shugyō ki* or *Kakukai's Hōgo*, *Kakuban's Himitsu shū* offers a more complex and, for many, perhaps more emotionally satisfying prospect in which, so to speak, all bases are covered, and the requirements of both goals, direct realization of buddhahood and birth in the Pure Land, can be simultaneously fulfilled.

Notes

Some of the material in this chapter represents a revision of portions of my essay "Death," in *Critical Terms for the Study of Buddhism*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 56–76. I thank the University of Chicago Press for permission to use it here. I would also like to thank Robert Gimello and Ryūichi Abé for their close reading of earlier versions of this chapter and their cogent suggestions for revision.

1. On the construction of *mikkyō* as a category in early Japan, see Ryūichi Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

2. See Hisao Inagaki, "Kūkai's 'Principle of Attaining Buddhahood with the Present Body'" (1975), reprinted in *Tantric Buddhism in East Asia*, ed. Richard K. Payne (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2006), 99–118. Not all Buddhist teachers identified *sokushin jōbutsu* with the esoteric teachings, however. Kūkai's contemporary, Saichō (766/767–822), founder of the Japanese Tendai school, asserted the same doctrine as a distinguishing feature of the *Lotus Sūtra*. See Paul Groner, "The *Lotus Sūtra* and Saichō's Interpretation of the Realization of Buddhahood with This Very Body," in *The Lotus Sūtra in Japanese Culture*, ed. George J. Tanabe, Jr. and Willa Jane Tanabe (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1989), 53–74.

3. On this point see Motoyama Kōju, "Shingon *mikkyō* to ōjō shisō," in *Kōgyō Daishi Kakuban kenkyū* (hereafter *KDKK*), ed. Kōgyō Daishi Kenkyū Ronshū Henshū Iinkai (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1992), 736–38.

4. Abé Ryūichi, "Mikkyō girei to kenmitsu bukkyō: Myōe-bō Kōben no nyūmetsu girei o megutte," in *Chūsei bukkyō no tenkai to sono kiban*, ed. Imai Masaharu (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 2002), 40–42. As Abé argues, this characterization is linked to a distinction made in Shingon sectarian scholarship between "pure *mikkyō*" (*junmitsu*), based on Kūkai's teaching of *sokushin jōbutsu* and concerned with contemplative practice for realizing the unity of Dainichi Nyorai and the practitioner, and "miscellaneous *mikkyō*" (*zōmitsu*), or rites directed toward other deities for healing, prosperity, or other pragmatic aims—a distinction that also privileges doctrinal writings over ritual manuals. However, recent studies have shown that the hierarchical categories of "pure" and "miscellaneous" *mikkyō* did not appear in Shingon scholarship until the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century and thus reflect notions of *mikkyō* orthodoxy that did not become normative until long after the Heian period. On this issue see Misaki Ryōshū: "Junmitsu to zōmitsu' ni tsuite," *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* (hereafter *IBK*) 15, no. 2 (1967): 535–40, and *Taimitsu no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sōbunsha, 1988), 146–65, as well as Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra*, 152–54, 178, 271.

5. Several of these scriptures are listed in Izumi Kōyō, "Mikkyō ni

okeru Mida shisō," in *Amida shinkō*, ed. Itō Yuishin (Tokyo: Yūzankaku Shuppan, 1984), 220–24. Izumi categorizes these texts as "miscellaneous mikkyō" (*zōmitsu*); again, however, this characterization represents a historically recent notion of Shingon orthodoxy. There is no evidence that Heian practitioners understood rites for achieving birth in the Pure Land to be an adulterated or lesser form of esoteric teaching.

6. *Dale jingang bukong zhenshi sanmeiye jing boru boluomiduo liqushi*, *T* no. 1003, 19:612b–c. On the *Rishukyō*, see note 28 below.

7. *Wuliangshou rulai guanxing gongyang yigui*, *T* no. 930, 19:67c, 69b, and 70b.

8. *Nihon ōjō gokuraku ki* 6, in *Ōjōden, Hokke genki, Zoku Nihon bukkyō shisō* (hereafter ZNBS) 1, ed. Inoue Mitsusada and Ōsone Shōsuke, reprint of the 1974 *Nihon shisō taikai* 7 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1995), 1:21.

9. *Nihon ōjō gokuraku ki* 19, ZNBS 1:30.

10. *Ibid.*, 20, ZNBS 1:30.

11. *Shinkō Kōya shunjū hennnen shūroku* 4, ed. Hinonishi Shinjō (Tokyo: Meicho Shuppan, 1982), 56a.

12. For further examples, see Abé, "Mikkyō girei to kenmitsu bukkyō," 39–40.

13. *Ryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai kesshū kakochō* (hereafter *Kakochō*), *Zoku Tendai-shū zensho* (hereafter *ZTZ*), *Shiden* 2, ed. Tendai Shūten Hensanjo (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1988), 277–91. This record, begun in 1013, records the names of fifty-one monks who belonged to the Nijūgo Zanmai-e. For seventeen of them, a short biography is included, describing their practices during life and at the time of death, as well as their success—or in a few cases, failure—in achieving *ōjō*, such outcomes being communicated in dreams to surviving society members. The purpose of the record may have been to compile just such "proof" that the society's practices did indeed lead to birth in the Pure Land. See Robert F. Rhodes, "Seeking the Pure Land in Heian Japan: The Practices of the Monks of the Nijūgo Zanmai-e," *Eastern Buddhist* n. s. 33, no. 1 (2000): 56–79.

14. *Kakochō*, *ZTZ*, *Shiden* 2:281a.

15. *Ibid.*, 2:282a.

16. *Ibid.*, 2:285a–b. The *Amida kuyō hō* or *Amida hō* was based on the *Wuliangshou yigui* (see note 7) and is said to bring about birth in Amida's Pure Land.

17. *Kakochō*, *ZTZ*, *Shiden* 2:290a. The longer and shorter Amida spells, based on the *Wuliangshou yigui*, are two versions of the Amida dhāraṇī, whose recitation is said to eradicate sins and bring about birth in the Pure Land. The Sonshō Daibutchō or Sonshō Butchō (Skt. *uṣṇīṣavijayā*) dhāraṇī is the dhāraṇī of the Buddha Sonshō Butchō (a.k.a. Butchō Sonshō), a personification of the knot of flesh, one of a buddha's thirty-two superior marks, on the crown of Śākyamuni Buddha's head. Recitation of this

dhāraṇī was said to eradicate sin and prolong life. In translating the name of this dhāraṇī as "Superlative Spell," I follow Paul Copp, "Voice, Dust, Shadow, Stone: Forms of Dhāraṇīs in Medieval China," Ph.D. diss. (Princeton University, 2005), 40–44. The Arorikkia mantra refers to the dhāraṇī of Tara (Skt. *Tārā*), a manifestation of Kannon. The esoteric deity Butsugen (a.k.a. Butsugen Butsumo)—literally, "Buddha-eye, Buddha-mother"—symbolizes the wisdom of the buddhas.

18. *Kakochō*, *ZTZ*, *Shiden* 2:287b, 286b. The fifteen kinds of undesirable death are (1) to die of starvation and poverty; (2) to be put in stocks and tortured to death; (3) to be murdered by someone with a grudge; (4) to die in battle; (5) to be killed by a ferocious animal, such as a wildcat or wolf; (6) to be bitten to death by snakes or scorpions; (7) to be burned to death or to be drowned; (8) to die of poisoning; (9) to die of intestinal worms; (10) to die of madness; (11) to die by falling off trees or cliffs; (12) to die from curses; (13) to die through the acts of evil spirits; (14) to die of evil diseases; and (15) to commit suicide (*Qianshou quianyan dabeixin jing*, *T* no. 1060, 20:107b; trans. from Robert F. Rhodes, "Pure Land Practitioner or Lotus Devotee? On the Earliest Biographies of Genshin," *Japanese Religions* 21, no. 1 (1996): 37n13. See also the biography of Genshin in *Zoku honchō ōjōden* 9, ZNBS 1:232–36. On the Mantra of Light, see note 21 below.

19. *Ōjō yōshū*, *Genshin, Nihon shisō taikai* (hereafter *NST*), 6, ed. Ishida Mizumaro (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1970), 254.

20. *Zoku honchō ōjōden* 10, ZNBS 1:236. *Kakochō* is known to have composed a treatise, no longer extant, on the moon-disk contemplation. See entry under "Gatsurinkan" in *Bussho kaisetsu daijiten*, ed. Ono Genmyō (1933–36; rev. ed. Tokyo: Daitō Shuppan, 1964–67), 2:78d.

21. The major textual sources for the Mantra of Light (*kōmyō shingon*) are the esoteric scripture *Bukong juansuo shenbian zhenyan jing* (*T* no. 1092); the ritual manual *Bukong juansuo Piluzhenafu daguanding guang-zhenyan* (*T* no. 1002), translated by Amoghavajra; and the ritual manual *Kōmyō shingon giki*, a Japanese apocryphon. Chanting this mantra over sand 108 times and then sprinkling the sand thus empowered over the bodies or graves of the deceased is said to release those dead from the realms of suffering and enable their birth in Amida's Pure Land. On this practice in Heian Japan, see Kushida Ryōkō, *Shingon mikkyō seiritsu katei no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1964), 153–80, and Hayami Tasuku, *Heian kizoku shakai to bukkyō* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1975), 165–202.

Funerary use of the *kōmyō shingon* is specified in both sets of regulations extant for the Nijūgo Zanmai-e, the 986 *Kishō hachikajō*, attributed to Yoshishige no Yasutane (article 2), and the 988 *Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai kishō*, attributed to Genshin (article 4). The critical edition of both texts has been published in Koyama Shōjun, "Tōdaiji Chūshōin shozō

'Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai Eshin Yasutane rinjū gyōgi' no saikentō: Sōshobon no goshoku ni yoru mondaiten," *Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 53 (1997): 56–95 (see 86–87 and 76). On the society's use of the Mantra of Light, see Hayami, *Heian kizoku shakai to bukkyō*, 170–73.

22. On these communities, as well as Pure Land practices on Mt. Kōya more broadly, see Inoue Mitsusada, *Nihon Jōdokyō seiritsushi no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yamakawa Shuppan, 1956; rev. ed. 1975), 335–82 *passim*; Wada Akio, "Kōyasan ni okeru Kamakura bukkyō," in *Kamakura bukkyō keisei no mondaiten*, ed. Nihon Bukkyō Gakkai (Kyoto: Heirakuji Shoten, 1969), 79–95; and Gorai Shigeru, *Kōya hijiri* (Tokyo: Kadokawa Shoten, 1975).

23. *Kōyasan ōjōden* 1, ZNBS 1:696.

24. Hayami, *Heian kizoku shakai to bukkyō*, 183–96.

25. *Shūi ōjōden* II:19, ZNBS 1:374.

26. *Zoku honchō ōjōden* 5, ZNBS 1:228.

27. *Shūi ōjōden* I:11, ZNBS 1:297; cf. *Kōyasan ōjōden* 3, 1:696–97.

28. *Shūi ōjōden* III:13, ZNBS 1:369. The *rishu zanmai* service involves chanting of the esoteric scripture *Rishukyō* (Ch. *Liqu jing*), along with other incantations. Reciting the *Rishukyō* was said to remove sins and karmic hindrances and to protect the practitioner from falling into the hells. Several versions of this scripture exist (see *T* nos. 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, as well as fascicle 578 of the 600-fascicle *Dabore jing*, *T* no. 220).

29. *Nihon ōjō gokuraku ki* 16, ZNBS 1:27–28.

30. *Ibid.*, 37, ZNBS 1:38–39.

31. *Zoku honchō ōjōden* 27, ZNBS 1:244–45; *Sange ōjōden* 37, ZNBS 1:678; *Kōyasan ōjōden* 7, ZNBS 1:698.

32. *Honchō shinshū ōjōden* 6, ZNBS 1:684.

33. *Kōyasan ōjōden* 22, ZNBS 1:701. The "Land of Esoteric Splendor" (*mitsugon kokudo*, *mitsugonkoku*, *mitsugon jōdo*, etc.) refers to the realm where the body, mouth, and mind of the cosmic Buddha Dainichi are united with the body, mouth, and mind of the esoteric adept through practice of the three secrets. It is mentioned in the *Dasheng miyan jing* (*T* nos. 681 and 682), *Jingangfeng louge yiqie yujia yuqi jing* (*T* no. 867), and *Putixin lun* (*T* no. 1665). The concept of Esoteric Splendor as a pure land undergoes development in the thought of Kakuban, for example, in his *Mitsugon jōdo ryakkan*.

34. *Kōyasan ōjōden* 33, ZNBS 1:703. Nōgan's example is significant in light of the adaptations of three secrets contemplation practice to the time of death, discussed below.

35. *Shūi ōjōden* I:17, ZNBS 1:305–6; *Kōyasan ōjōden* 4, ZNBS 1:697–98. The bodhisattva Saihōin (a.k.a. Kongōin) is one of four bodhisattvas attending Muryōju or Amida as he appears in the perfected body assembly (*jō-jinne*), the central assembly of the Diamond Realm maṇḍala. There, Muryō-

ju Nyorai is one of four directional buddhas surrounding Dainichi, each of whom is seated inside a moon disk and attended by four bodhisattvas.

36. *Keiran shūyōshū* 86, *T* no. 2410, 76:781b. The *Kōyasan Daidenbōin hongan reizui narabi ni jike engi*, a biography of the esoteric master Kakuban (1095–1143) said to have been compiled by one Kakuman of Negoroji in 1292, mentions some disagreement among Kakuban's disciples as to whether he had faced west or north at the time of his death and concludes that he must have faced north (*Kōgyō Daishi denki shiryō zenshū*, 3 vols., ed. Miura Akio [Tokyo: Pitaka, 1977], 1:39). Since both these sources date from around the late Kamakura period (1185–1333), their accounts of the death of Saigyō and Kakuban may represent retrospective claims.

37. For example, the constantly walking samādhi (*jōgyō zanmai*), of one the four samādhis of the Tendai (Ch. Tiantai) school, originally involved the visualization of Amida with the aim of realizing the identity of the practitioner and the Buddha. See Daniel B. Stevenson, "The Four Kinds of Samādhi in Early T'ien-t'ai Buddhism," in *Traditions of Meditation in Chinese Buddhism*, ed. Peter N. Gregory (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1986), 45–97 (59–61). (On Mt. Hiei, however, this meditation would be transformed into a rite for eradicating sin and achieving birth in the Pure Land. See Sonoda Kōyū, "Yama no nenbutsu: Sono kigen to seikaku," 1968; reprinted in his *Heian bukkyō no kenkyū* [Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1981], 163–91, and Paul Groner, *Ryōgen and Mount Hiei: Japanese Tendai in the Tenth Century* [Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002], 175–79.) Another example is that strand of medieval Tendai original enlightenment (*hongaku*) literature stressing the non-duality of the Amida and the practitioner and including a number of apocryphal texts on that theme retrospectively attributed to Genshin. See, for example, Hanano Mitsuaki (a.k.a. Hanano Jūdō), "Chūko Tendai bunken to nenbutsu shisō," included in Satō Tetsuei, *Eizan Jōdokyō no kenkyū* (Kyoto: Hyakkaen, 1979), 318–46.

38. The *rinjū gyōgi* section of the *Ōjō yōshū* may be found in *NST* 6:206–17. For a partial translation, see James C. Dobbins, "Genshin's Deathbed Nembutsu Ritual in Pure Land Buddhism," in *Religions of Japan in Practice*, ed. George J. Tanabe, Jr. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 166–75.

39. *Siferlü shanfan bujue xingshi chao*, *T* no. 1804, 40:144a, cited in *Ōjō yōshū*, *NST* 6:206.

40. *Guannian famen*, *T* no. 1959, 47:24b–c, cited in *Ōjō yōshū*, *NST* 6:207.

41. *Anleji*, *T* 1958, no. 47:11b, cited in *Ōjō yōshū*, *NST* 6:208. The "ten moments of reflection" here refers, on one hand, to the famous eighteenth vow of Amida, which promises birth in his Pure Land to all who aspire to this goal with sincerity and call him to mind "even ten times" (*Wuliangshou*

jing, T no. 360, 12:268a). It also refers to the *Contemplation Sūtra's* claims that even an evil person, if he encounters a good friend (*zenchishiki*) who instructs him at the hour of death so that he is able to sustain ten thoughts of Amida, shall, with each thought, erase the sins of eight billion kalpas and be born in Amida's Pure Land (*Guan wuliangshou jing*, T no. 365, 12:346a). Exactly how these "ten thoughts" should be understood was a matter of considerable debate and was embedded in a larger controversy over the respective merits of the contemplative visualization of Amida or the chanting of his name. Genshin took "ten continuous *nenbutsu*" at the time of death to mean reflecting upon Amida, aided by the invocation of his name. While his general approach to Pure Land practice focused upon visualization and contemplation, he also held that under the liminal influence of approaching death, the chanted *nenbutsu* becomes vastly more powerful than it is at ordinary times (*Ōjō yōshū*, NST 6:296).

42. These are described in *Kishō hachikajō*, articles 4–6, and *Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai kishō*, articles 7–8. See Koyama, "Tōdaiji Chūshōin shozō 'Yokawa Shuryōgon'in nijūgo zanmai Eshin Yasutane rinjū gyōgi' no saikentō," 88–90 and 79–80.

43. On Jichihan, see Satō Tetsuei, "Nakanokawa Jichihan no shōgai to sono Jōdokyō," *Mikkyō bunka*, nos. 71–72 (1965): 21–52, and Marc Bunjisters, "Jichihan and the Restoration and Innovation of Buddhist Practice," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 26, nos. 1–2 (1999): 39–82. I have followed Bunjisters in using the pronunciation "Jichihan."

44. *Byōchū shugyō ki*, *Shingonshū arjin zensho* (hereafter SAZ), ed. Hase Hōshū (Kyoto: Rokudaishinbōsha, 1913–14), 2:781–85. I am indebted to James Sanford for introducing me to this text. For discussion, see Ōtani Teruo, "Jichihan *Byōchū shugyō ki* ni tsuite," *Bukkyō bunka kenkyū* 13 (1966): 43–58.

45. *Byōchū shugyō ki*, SAZ 2:785.

46. For more on the determinative power of the last thought, see Jacqueline Stone, "By the Power of One's Last *Nenbutsu*: Deathbed Practices in Early Medieval Japan," in *Approaching the Land of Bliss: Religious Praxis in the Cult of Amitābha*, ed. Richard K. Payne and Kenneth K. Tanaka (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 77–119.

47. *Byōchū shugyō ki*, article 3, SAZ 2:782.

48. On use of the Lotus repentance rite at the time of death, see Takagi Yutaka, "Ōjōden ni okeru Hokke shinkō," in *Hokke shinkō no shokeitai*, ed. Nomura Yōshō (Kyoto: Heirakuji, 1976), 451–84 (468–77).

49. The notion that "contemplating the true aspect" can dissolve karmic hindrances by awakening insight into their conditioned, non-substantial nature is certainly not limited to the esoteric teachings. Cf. the *Guan Puxian Pusa xingfa jing* (Sūtra on the practice of contemplating Bodhisattva Samantabhadra): "The sea of all karmic hindrances/arises from

deluded thought./If you wish to perform repentance./sit upright and contemplate the true aspect./The myriad sins are like frost and dew,/which the sun of wisdom can dispel" (T no. 277, 9:393b). The Tendai school refers to this as "repentance in terms of principle" (*J. risan*) (e.g., *Tiantai sijiaoyi*, T no. 1931, 46:779a).

50. This has been pointed out by Ōtani ("Jichihan *Byōchū shugyō ki* ni tsuite," 50). As Bunjisters notes ("Jichihan and the Restoration," 66), Ōtani's reading stands in diametric contrast to that of other scholars who have taken this statement as indicating that Jichihan was still under the influence of exoteric readings of the Pure Land as a realm far remote from this present world. See, for example, Satō, "Nakanokawa Jichihan no shōgai to sono Jōdokyō," 38, and Kushida Ryōkō, *Kakuban no kenkyū* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1975), 175–77.

51. *Byōchū shugyō ki*, article 6, SAZ 783–84.

52. Contemplation of the white curl is included in the ninth of sixteen visualizations for achieving birth in Amida's land set forth in the *Contemplation Sūtra*. The sūtra speaks of Amida's light emanating from this auspicious mark and embracing all those who think of him; it also suggests the white curl as a point of entry for beginning visualization of Amida's body (*Guan wuliangshou jing*, T 12:343b, c). Genshin assimilates this contemplation to deathbed practice in his seventh and eighth points of encouragement to the dying (*Ōjō yōshū* 2, NST 6:212–14).

53. Article 7, SAZ 2:784. In the latter Heian period, after Genshin's time, "contemplation of the white curl" (*byakugōkan*) underwent considerable development. Sueki Fumihiko has noted a connection between this reference in Jichihan's *Byōchū shugyō ki* and roughly contemporaneous Japanese Tendai Pure Land works recommending meditation on the white curl between Amida's brows as encompassing various doctrinal categories such as the three bodies or threefold truth (*Kamakura bukkyō keisei ron* [Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1998], 325–29).

54. *Guan wuliangshou jing shu*, T no. 1753, 37:268a; trans. Julian Pas, *Visions of Sukāvati: Shan-Tao's Commentary on the Kuan Wu-liang-Shou-Fo Ching* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 272–73.

55. Ōtani, "Jichihan *Byōchū shugyō ki* ni tsuite," 52–53; see also Bunjisters, "Jichihan and the Restoration," 67–68.

56. For an overview of this practice in Japan and its continental antecedents, see Richard K. Payne, "Ajikan: Ritual and Meditation in the Shingon Tradition," in *Re-Visioning "Kamakura" Buddhism*, ed. Richard K. Payne (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 219–48. Payne's observation (221)—that *ajikan* is both meditation and ritual—holds true for a number of esoteric rites and practices.

57. *Byōchū shugyō ki*, article 8, SAZ 2:784. This interpretative structure is very close to that of the Tendai threefold truth, in which the extremes of

“emptiness” (*kū*) and “conventional existence” (*ke*) are simultaneous affirmed and negated by the Middle (*chū*), and may reflect the influence of Jichihan’s Tendai studies.

58. This passage bears some structural similarity to the equation in medieval Tendai thought of the three characters A-mi-da with the threefold truth of emptiness, conventional existence, and the Middle Way. See, for example, Sueki Fumihiko, “Amida santai-setsu o megutte,” *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 28, no. 1 (1979): 216–22.

59. Recommendations for simplified forms of deathbed *ajikan*—often simply forming the sound “a” with one’s last breath—seem to have been widespread during the latter part of the Kamakura period. See, for example, the references to this practice in *Buppō yume monogatari* by the Shin-gon master Chidō (latter thirteenth century) (in *Kana hōgo shū, Nihon koten bungaku taikei* [hereafter *NKBT*] 83, ed. Miyasaka Yūshō [Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964], 222–23, trans. William M. Bodiford, “Chidō’s *Dreams of Buddhism*,” in Tanabe, ed., *Religions of Japan in Practice*, 242–43; the *Hakuun Oshō yume no ki* of Hakuun Egyō (1223–97), a disciple of the Zen teacher Enni (*Dai Nihon bukkyō zensho* [hereafter *DNBZ*], ed. Suzuki Gakujutsu Zaidan [Tokyo: Suzuki Gakujutsu Zaidan, 1970–73], 48:269b); and the *Kōyōshū*, attributed to Kakuban but almost certainly a later work (*DNBZ* 43:30b–c). Also, Enkyō, abbess of Hokkeji, writing in 1304 about the nuns active in the Kamakura-period revival of her temple, names several women who passed away while contemplating the a syllable (*Hokke metsuzaiji engi, Yamato koji taikan*, ed. Iwanami Kōjirō [Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976–78], 5:142b–143a). I am indebted to Lori Meeks for providing me with this reference. The relevant passage is translated in her “Nuns, Court Ladies, and Female Bodhisattvas: The Women of Japan’s Medieval Ritsu-School Nuns’ Revival Movement,” Ph.D. diss. (Princeton University, 2003), 142–44.

60. When he learned of Jichihan’s death, the courtier Fujiwara no Yorinaga (1120–51) noted in his diary that people said the holy man would surely be born in Amida’s land, to which he had aspired for many years (*Taiki*, Ten’yō 1 [1144], 9/10, *Zōho shiryō taisei*, ed. Zōho Shiryō Taisei Kan-kōkai [Kyoto: Rinsen Shōbō, 1965], 23:128b). See also Bunjisters, “Jichihan and the Restoration,” 75–76.

61. For example, Kushida Ryōkō, *Shingon mikkyō seiritsu katei no kenkyū*, 187–88, and *Kakuban no kenkyū*, 175–77. Outside the realm of sectarian scholarship, a very different view has been voiced by Ryūichi Abé, who sees the *Byōchū shugyō ki* as a “conservative” text, emphasizing Shingon non-dual orthodoxy (“*Mikkyō girei to kenmitsu bukkyō*,” 42).

62. Nichiren, for example, writes that a person of wisdom awakened to the *Lotus Sūtra* who makes offerings before the corpse of a deceased person

enables that individual to achieve buddhahood “in this body” (*Mokue nizō kaigen no koto, Shōwa teihon Nichiren Shōnin ibun*, ed. Rishshō Daigaku Nichiren Kyōgaku Kenkyūjo (Minobu-chō, Yamanashi: Minobusan Kuonji, rev. 1988), 1:794. In the early modern period, successful cases of ascetic “self-mummification” were also spoken of as instances of *sokushin jōbutsu*. See Ichirō Hori, “Self-Mummified Buddhas in Japan: An Aspect of the Shugen-dō (‘Mountain Asceticism’) Sect,” *History of Religions* 1, no. 2 (1962): 222–42. When the term first came to be used in this context remains to be determined.

63. The *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū* is included in *Kōgyō Daishi zenshū* (hereafter *KDZ*), ed. Tomita Kōjun (1935; reprint Tokyo: Hōsenji, 1977), 2:1197–1220, and *Kōgyō Daishi senjutsu shū* (hereafter *KDS*), ed. Miyasaka Yūshō (Tokyo: Sankibō Busshorin, 1977; rev. 1989), 157–76. The *KDZ* version preserves the original *kanbun*; *KDS* has been rendered into Japanese and includes notes.

The *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū* is virtually identical to the sixth and sole extant fascicle of the *Jūnen Gokuraku iōshū*, compiled by the monk Butsugon (fl. late twelfth century), himself of Kakuban’s Denbōin lineage (see Ōya Tokujō, “Butsugon to *Jūnen Gokuraku iōshū*: Fujiwara Kanezane no shinkō ni kansuru gimon,” 1924; reprinted in his *Nihon bukkyōshi no kenkyū* [Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1927; reprinted 1988], 3:258–76). Entries in the diary of the regent Kujō Kanezane (1149–1207) record that Butsugon showed Kanezane a work in six fascicles called *Jūnen Gokuraku iōshū* and that Butsugon had “compiled it by order of the retired sovereign [Goshirakawa]” (see *Gyokuyō*, Angen 2 [1176], 11/30, and *Jishō* 1 [1177], 10/2). On this basis, some influential scholars, notably Ishida Mizumaro, have argued that the *Himitsu shū* is not Kakuban’s work but Butsugon’s (*Jōdokyō no tenkai* [Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1967], 212–14). Inoue Mitsusada also treats it as Butsugon’s work (*Nihon Jōdokyō seiritsushi no kenkyū*, 362–64). However, cogent arguments for Kakuban’s authorship had already been advanced by Takase Shōgon, who noted the similarity in content between the *Himitsu shū* and other works of Kakuban related to Pure Land thought, especially the *Gorin kuji myō himitsu shaku* and *Amida hishaku*; he also noted that Goshirakawa had asked Butsugon to “compile” (not “compose”) the *Jūnen Gokuraku iōshū*. In all probability, Takase argued, Butsugon had simply included Kakuban’s *Himitsu shū* in an anthology and was not himself its author (“*Jūnen Gokuraku iōshū kō*,” *Bukkyōgaku* 1, no. 6 [1924]: 32–48). Kakuban’s authorship has also been upheld by Matsuzaki Keisui (“*Kōgyō Daishi Kakuban no Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū ni tsuite*,” *IBK* 20, no. 2 [1972]: 251–55); Kushida Ryōkō (*Kakuban no kenkyū* [Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1975], 165); Sakagami Masao, “Butsugon-bō Shōshin ni tsuite,” *Bukkyō ronsō* 26 (1982): 145–49; and Wada Shūjō, “*Jūnen Gokuraku iōshū*

ni tsuite," *IBK* 32, no. 1 (1983): 1–10. Wada gives an especially detailed account of the debate over Kakuban's authorship. I have treated the *Himitsu shū* here as Kakuban's work.

64. On Kakuban, see, for example, Kushida, *Kakuban no kenkyū*, and Matsuzaki Keisui, *Heian mikkyō no kenkyū: Kōgyō Daishi Kakuban o chūshin toshite* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2002), as well as the essays in *KDKK*. In English, see Ryūichi Abé, "From Kūkai to Kakuban: A Study of Shingon Buddhist Dharma Transmission," Ph.D. diss. (Columbia University, 1991); Hendrik van der Veere, *Kakuban Shōnin: The Life and Works of Kōgyō Daishi* (Tokyo: Nombre, 1998); and, on Kakuban's *nenbutsu* thought in particular, James H. Sanford, "Amida's Secret Life: Kakuban's *Amida hishaku*," in Payne and Tanaka, eds., *Approaching the Land of Bliss*, 120–38.

65. For a detailed comparison of the two texts, see Kushida, *Kakuban no kenkyū*, 159–77.

66. *KDZ* 2:1197; *KDS* 157. The "nine grades" is a reference to nine levels of birth in the Pure Land (*kuhon ōjō*), corresponding to the degree of the practitioner's spiritual cultivation (*Guan wuliangshou jing*, *T* 12:344c–346a).

67. See Ryūichi Abé, "Bridging Ritual and Text: Kakuban's Writing on Meditative Practice," *KDKK* 1076–1073 (reverse pagination), and van der Veere, *Kakuban Shōnin*, 161–64.

68. Kakuban discusses the two meditations in article 6 of the *Himitsu shū* (*KDZ* 2:1201–13; *KDS* 160–72). Here he follows the *Putixin lun*, which specifies three levels of *bodhicitta*, or aspiration for enlightenment: practice and vows to save living beings (*J. gyōgan bodaishin*); choosing superior teachings over inferior ones (*shōgi bodaishin*); and the *samādhi bodhicitta*, which is equal to the Buddha's own enlightenment (*T* no. 1665, 32:572c–573c).

69. *KDZ* 2:1215; *KDS* 173. Miyasaka notes that the phrase *shingon nenbutsu*—to contemplate the Buddha by means of mantra—has a "secret meaning" (*KDS* 361n60).

70. The removal to a separate hall and the enshrining of the object of worship are discussed in articles 3 and 4 respectively (*KDZ* 2:1199–1200; *KDS* 159). The admonition to bar entry to those who have recently consumed alcohol, meat, or pungent roots (article 8, *KDZ* 2:1215; *KDS* 173) derives from Shandao's *Guannian famen*, *T* 47:24b–c. Genshin quotes Shandao's admonition in his *Ōjō yōshū* (*NST* 6:207), and it is repeated in the majority of Japanese instructions for deathbed practice.

71. Article 8, *KDZ* 2:1214–16; *KDS* 173. Kakuban draws on the recommendation of Daochuo, also cited in *Ōjō yōshū*, that the practitioner should make a pact in advance with three to five persons of like mind who can assist one another at the time of death (*Anleji*, *T* 47:11b). The *Himitsu shū* is

ambiguous as to whether the dying person is included among a total of five individuals who have pledged to act together as *zenchishiki* or whether there are to be five *zenchishiki* in addition to the dying person. The above passage specifies tasks for five attendants at the deathbed, but the instruction that "all four should chant together" and the reference to the "five kinds of wisdom" suggest that there are only five persons present *in toto*, including the dying person.

72. Article 8, *KDZ* 2:1216–17; *KDS* 173–74.

73. *Guan wuliangshou jing*, *T* 12:341c–342a.

74. Kushida, *Kakuban no kenkyū*, 205.

75. See *ibid.*, 201–7, and James H. Sanford, "Breath of Life: The Esoteric *Nenbutsu*," in *Esoteric Buddhism in Japan* (1994); reprinted in Payne, ed., *Tantric Buddhism in East Asia*, 161–89.

76. *T* no. 997, 19:574a.

77. Article 9, *KDZ* 2:1217–19; *KDS* 174–76.

78. See, for example, Haseo Fumiaki, "Shingonkei rinjū gyōgi ni okeru sōsō to no kanren," *Bukkyō ronsō* 32 (1988): 125–29.

79. Unidentified. This appears to be Kakuban's interpretation, as Shanwuwei, to my knowledge, does not contrast "exoteric" and "esoteric" in this way.

80. Article 7, *KDZ* 2:1214; *KDS* 172.

81. See, for example, Kushida, *Kakuban no kenkyū*, 175–84; Tachibana Nobuo, "Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū ni okeru 'rinjū gyōgi' ni tsuite," *IBK* 36, no. 2 (1988): 131; and van der Veere, *Kakuban Shōnin*, 193–95.

82. Motoyama, "Shingon mikkyō to ōjō shisō," 740.

83. Article 6, *KDZ* 2:1211, 1213; *KDS* 169–70, 171.

84. See, for example, Kitao Ryūshin, "Kōgyō Daishi ni okeru ōjō ni tsuite: *Gorin kuji myō himitsu shaku* to *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū* to no sōi o chūshin toshite," *IBK* 40, no. 2 (1992): 657–60; Tomobechi Seiichi, "Kōgyō Daishi Kakuban no kikonkan (1): Sokushin jōbutsu to jōdo ōjō," *Taishō Daigaku Sōgō Bukkyō Kenkyūjo nenpō* 15 (1993): 47–60; and Matsuzaki Keisui, "Jōbutsu shisō to ōjō shisō," in his *Heian mikkyō no kenkyū*, 599–619. An exception is Motoyama Kōju, who sees the *Himitsu shū* as foregrounding birth after death in a pure land ("Shingon mikkyō to ōjō shisō," 740–41). In regard to this issue, the *Ichigo taiyō himitsu shū* has often been read in conjunction with the *Gorin kuji myō himitsu shaku*, another of Kakuban's later works containing comparable statements relating *ōjō* and *sokushin jōbutsu* to the practitioner's capacity.

85. Kakuban's purely doctrinal writings on Pure Land themes place greater emphasis on the non-dual perspective. See, for example, his *Mitsugon jōdo ryakkan*, trans. in Abé, "From Kūkai to Kakuban," 414–24, or *Amida hishaku*, trans. in Sanford, "Amida's Secret Life," 128–33.

86. SAZ 2:792–75. I am indebted to James Sanford for introducing me to this text. For more on Dōhan's esoteric *nenbutsu* thought, see Sanford, "Breath of Life," 175–79.

87. *Ibid.*, 2:793. Dōhan alludes here to A VI RA HŪM KHAM, the root mantra of Dainichi.

88. *Ibid.*, 2:792.

89. A similar double logic appears in some Tendai texts that simultaneously acknowledge both the immanence of the Pure Land and its existence in the western direction. For example, "Even though one knows Amida Buddha to be one's own mind, one forms a relationship with Amida Buddha of the west and in this way manifests the Amida who is one's own mind. Thus, those who say that one should not contemplate the west because Amida is one's own mind commit a grave error" (*Jigyō nenbutsu mondō*, DNBZ 39:68c).

90. In *Kana hōgo shū*, NKBT 83:55–58; trans. with commentary by Robert E. Morrell in his *Early Kamakura Buddhism: A Minority Report* (Berkeley, CA: Asian Humanities Press, 1987), 89–102.

91. NKBT 83:57; trans. from Morrell, *Early Kamakura Buddhism*, 99–100, slightly modified.

92. *Ibid.*; trans. from Morrell, *Early Kamakura Buddhism*, 100, slightly modified. Gochi-bō Yūgen was a disciple and relative of Kakukai who practiced in reclusion on Mt. Kōya, and, indeed, there is no record of his last moments.

93. Kakukai is said to have died auspiciously, forming a secret mudrā of Dainichi (see entry for "Kakukai" in *Mikkyō jiten*, ed. Mikkyō Jiten Hensankai [Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1931; rev. 1979], 1:215b). I have not yet been able to identify the particular biography in which this element occurs.